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ABSTRACT

This survey of public opinion about Chicago Public Schools charts responses in the following areas: (1) general evaluation of the public schools; (2) grading the staff; (3) the biggest problems facing Chicago schools; (4) a range of proposed reforms; and (5) finances. Characteristics of the respondents and public school parents also are plotted. Details of the technical methodology and a sample questionnaire are appended. The highlights of the survey are presented: (1) residents regarded Chicago schools as average and awarded them a 'C' grade, although parents of children in public schools rated the schools more highly; (2) lack of discipline, gangs, and inadequate funding were seen as the biggest problems facing Chicago schools; (3) more course requirements were favored; (4) 88 percent felt that high school students should pass a test before graduation; (5) respondents presented with a list of proposed reforms rated more help for slower students as highest priority; (6) the lengthening of the school day and school year was opposed; (7) respondents would require more of teachers; (8) a majority felt that Chicago schols needed more money; (9) if more money were available it was preferred that it be spent on supplies, repairs, and special programs; and (10) it was felt that principals should have more authority to run schools. A copy of the survey questionnaire is appended to the report. (RDN)

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Chicagoans View Their Public Schools

A Public Opinion Survey

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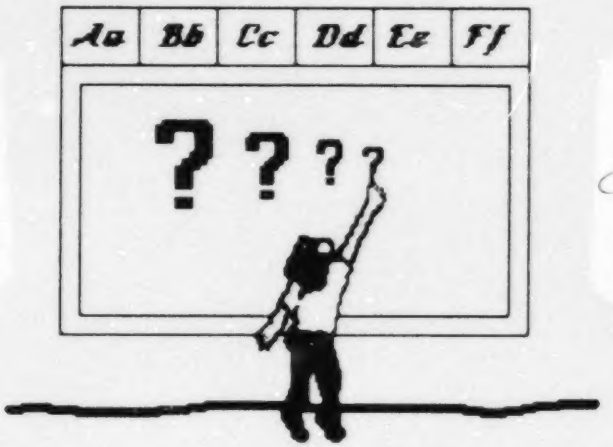

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June 1985

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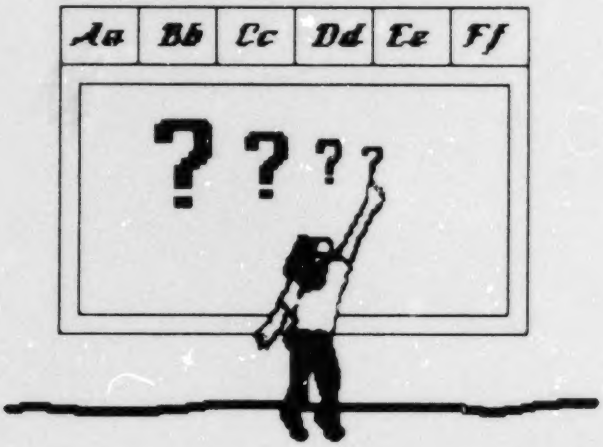
Chicagoans View Their Public Schools

A Public Opinion Survey



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PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

1. THE CHICAGO SCHOOLS ARE AVERAGE; RESIDENTS GIVE THEM A "C"

Overall, Chicagoans give the Chicago Public Schools a mark of "C"; 59% of all respondents graded the schools as average or above. Parents of children in public schools rate the schools more highly (63% average or above) while a majority of parents of children in private schools (59%) felt the schools were below average or failing. Blacks (65%) and Hispanics (64%) rated the schools more highly than did whites (49% average or above marks). Teachers and principals generally received higher grades than did the schools as a whole.

(See Sections I.2 and II.1 & 2, pp. 3 & 7)

2. LACK OF DISCIPLINE, GANGS, AND INADEQUATE FUNDING ARE SEEN AS THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS FACING CHICAGO SCHOOLS

Lack of Discipline (16%); Gangs (12%, Hispanics noted this problem more frequently, 20%); and Inadequate Funding (11%) were most frequently mentioned when residents were asked to define the most pressing problems facing the Chicago Public Schools. Only a few respondents mentioned Mismanagement, Dropouts, or Race Relations as areas of major concern.

(Section III, pg. 8)

3. MORE COURSE REQUIREMENTS ARE FAVORED

Overwhelmingly, Chicagoans favor a tougher curriculum for high schools than the current requirements. Blacks regularly preferred more course requirements than did Hispanics and whites, particularly empasizing the need for foreign languages, even for students not planning to attend college.

(Section IV.2b, pg. 13)

4. HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS SHOULD PASS A TEST BEFORE GRADUATION

Nine out of ten Chicagoans (88%) feel that all high school students in the United States should be required to pass a standard examination in order to get a high school diploma.

(Section IV.2a, pg. 13)

5. HIGHEST REFORM RATING IS GIVEN TO HELP FOR SLOW STUDENTS

Chicagoans favored more help for slower students (90%), more time teaching basic skills (88%), improving parent-school relations (87%), and enforcing tougher discipline (84%), when presented with a list of proposed school reforms.

(Section IV.1, pg. 10)

6. CHICAGOANS OPPOSE LENGTHENING SCHOOL DAY, SCHOOL YEAR

Adding hours to the school day (19% thought it very important, but 55% opposed the idea) and adding days to the school year (25% for, 44% opposed) were reforms largely rejected by respondents. Surprisingly, less than a majority of respondents thought early childhood education (49% for, 24% opposed), and raising teacher salaries (49% for, 13% opposed) were very important. (Section IV.1, pg. 10)

7. RESPONDENTS WOULD REQUIRE MORE OF TEACHERS

Chicagoans would require more of teachers: 95% favor competency exams before teachers can be certified (already a policy in Chicago); they favor binding arbitration (89%), merit pay (79%), added pay for teachers in subject areas of shortages (65%), and peer review (59%). They feel teachers are paid about the right amount now, but still favor tenure (62%). (Section IV.5, pg. 18)

8. CHICAGO SCHOOLS NEED MORE MONEY

The majority of Chicagoans (57%) feel the schools do not have enough money, but when asked to choose among four options, no single additional tax received majority support. The largest support was for increasing the state income tax (43%), with less support for a new city income tax (33%), increasing the sales tax (32%), and least support for increasing the property tax (22%). (Section V.1, pg. 23)

9. SUPPLIES, REPAIRS, SPECIAL PROGRAMS TOP USES FOR MORE DOLLARS

If more money were available to the public schools, respondents preferred that it be put into additional supplies (93%), repairs (91%), more special programs (79%), and lower class size (76%), before raising teacher salaries (53%). (Section V.2, pg. 24)

10. PRINCIPALS SHOULD HAVE MORE AUTHORITY TO RUN SCHOOLS

Chicagoans think principals should have more authority to run their schools, specifically regarding the school budget (82%), the use of the building (78%), supervision of non-teaching staff (75%), the hiring and firing of teachers (75%), and the selection of subjects taught (63%). (Section IV.5d, pg. 19)

PREFACE

This Public Opinion Survey about the Chicago Public Schools was conceived and organized by a group of former members of the Chicago Board of Education and professional educators. There has been much written about the Chicago schools recently. Politicians have made their pronouncements. Citizens groups have issued reports. The staff of the public schools and the Board itself have made their statements. But the opinions of city residents have not been adequately reported. What the people of the city think about their schools is an important measure of their success. This survey is an attempt to make the ordinary citizen's opinions known.

This survey was funded by grants from the Joyce Foundation and the Woods Charitable Fund. Without their support, this idea would not have come to fruition. The Survey Research Laboratory of the University of Illinois at Chicago was employed to determine the sample, conduct the telephone interviews of 1,816 residents, and reduce the resultant data for analysis. Herbert J. Walberg, Research Professor of Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago, served as the Primary Investigator, supervising the survey work and producing the initial analysis. The Chicago Panel on Public School Finances acted as sponsor and fiscal agent and produced the final report. We are grateful to all these persons for the assistance they provided.

We believe this report contains a great deal of very important information about the Chicago Public Schools and the population they serve. We hope it will be useful to policy makers and program staff. If the report proves valuable to others, this may become the first of a series of annual surveys, which may then act as a barometer of changing public opinion.

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PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY about the CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY
about the
CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

In recent years, special interest groups and experts have issued a number of reports on education in the nation and on the Chicago Public Schools. The purpose of this report is to describe the views of the public, that is, 1,816 Chicagoans who gave their views on these matters during the period of February and March, 1985 in a telephone survey conducted by the University of Illinois at Chicago.

In democracies, policies should be shaped in part by public opinion influencing policy makers. What the public thinks is important in deciding what educational policies and practices to follow, and it can be hoped that the information provided in this report will have some usefulness to State of Illinois legislators, the Chicago Board of Education and its staff, as well as many other groups who have interests and responsibilities for education in Chicago, the State of Illinois, and the nation.

This report presents a picture of how Chicagoans rate their schools and professional staff, what they think the problems are, what improvements should be made, and how finances affect the schools. The characteristics of those interviewed and of those who utilize the Chicago Public Schools are examined in a separate section.

It has seemed best both in planning this survey and in writing this document to report the facts as they are and to refrain from speculating about their causes, meaning, and implications. Except for highlighting in a previous section what seem to be some of the most important and interesting findings, this document reports all the facts about how the public responded and avoids urging what should be done.

It can be hoped, nonetheless, that such a complete factual report about the information gathered can serve as a useful basis for discussions and policies. Such discussions and policies will depend not only on the facts but also on the interpretations and value judgements of the participants. Rather than taking a partisan stance, this report will best serve the participants if it leaves the conclusions to its readers.

To facilitate the public discussion about the schools, copies of this survey, and of the data base from which this report is drawn, will be made available to the public at cost. A further breakdown of the data to the level of each of the 20 sub-districts is being compiled, and will be shared with each of the neighborhood areas of the city. In this way, grassroots citizens groups and policy-makers alike will have the information they need to make relevant decisions.

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY
about the
CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

I. EVALUATING THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1. General Satisfaction

In general, Chicagoans are more satisfied than not with the education the city's children receive from the public schools. Responses from 1,816 city residents over 18 years of age indicate that 61% are satisfied, while 39% are not at all satisfied with the city's schools. Among the satisfied respondents, only 5% said they were very satisfied.

Those familiar with the city's schools are more satisfied than are non-parents or parents whose children do not attend public schools. Almost two-thirds (63%) of public school parents were satisfied with the schools.

Hispanics and Blacks were more satisfied with the public schools than whites (66% and 64% vs. 57%); only in the Lincoln Park area of the city did a majority (55%) indicate they were dissatisfied with the public schools. (Question # 10)

2. Grading the Public Schools

When asked to give the schools a grade, as the schools grade their pupils, more respondents gave Chicago schools a "C" than any other grade; 39% answered with the average grade. Twenty percent ranked the schools above average (A or B), and 41% gave the schools a "D" or a failing grade. Thus, 59% of Chicagoans consider their public schools average or above. These same respondents gave higher grades to schools nationwide: 29% above average, 51% average, and 20% below average.

	Above Average A	B	Average C	Below Average D	F
Chicago	6%	14%	39%	27%	14%
Nationwide	7%	22%	51%	15%	5%

Chicagoans rate both their own schools and the nation's schools more severely than did this year's respondents to the national Gallup Poll (Phi Delta Kappan, September 1984). Nationally, 46% of those who rated the schools said they were above average, and only 16% said they were below average.

Rating Local Schools	Above Average A	B	Average C	Below Average D	F
1984 nat'l response	11%	35%	38%	12%	4%
1983 nat'l response	7%	30%	39%	16%	8%

However, Gallup pointed out that this was a significant up-turn from last year, and seems to reflect the enactment of educational reform legislation in many states. Illinois is only now considering such legislation. The range of responses among public school parents, private school parents, and those without children in schools was similar to the differences in Chicago.

When only urban respondents were recorded in the Gallup survey, ratings are closer to those given by Chicagoans.

Urban School Ratings	Above Average A	B	Average C	Below Average D	F
Urban Schools	10%	32%	40%	13%	5%
Nation's Schools	2%	26%	55%	12%	5%

Thus, Chicagoans and other urbanites rate the nation's schools very similarly (29% vs. 28% above average, 51% vs. 55% average, 20% vs. 17% below average), but most urbanites rated their city's schools more highly (Chicagoans 20% above average vs. 42% elsewhere, 39% vs. 40% average, but 41% below average vs. 18% elsewhere).

Parents with children in the public schools graded the schools more highly than those less familiar with them. Almost two-thirds of these parents (64%) rated the Chicago schools average or above; those without children gave similar grades, while those with young children or children in non-public schools generally see the Chicago schools as below average:

	Above Average A	B	Average C	Below Average D	F
Parents Public	7%	18%	39%	26%	10%
Parents Private	3%	7%	31%	32%	27%
Kids not in sch	4%	10%	36%	33%	17%
Non-parents	6%	14%	42%	25%	13%

Blacks and Hispanics graded the schools more highly than did Whites, regardless of their parental status:

	Above Average A	B	Average C	Below Average D	F
Blacks	8%	17%	40%	23%	12%
Hispanics	9%	23%	31%	25%	12%
Whites	2%	8%	39%	33%	18%

It should be noted that fewer whites interviewed (30% vs. 67% of Hispanics and 56% of Blacks) had school age children, and among those who did, white children were more likely to be in non-public schools (56% vs. 25% and 24%). Of those who responded to the survey, 31% had children in the public schools; this figure is somewhat higher than statewide figures released in other recent studies.

Similarly, inner city residents were more likely to give higher grades to the schools than were residents along the lakefront or in neighborhoods on the outer fringe of the city. However, the widest range was found between the Back of the Yards/Southside area (District 13), an inner city neighborhood and the Lincoln Park area (District 3) along the lakefront. Similarly, these two districts had the highest (42%) and lowest (12%) proportion of respondents with children in the public schools.

	Above Average A	B	Average C	Below Average D	F
Areas of the city					
Inner City	7%	17%	39%	25%	13%
Lakefront	5%	10%	35%	33%	17%
Fringe of City	3%	12%	43%	27%	15%
School sub-districts					
3.Back of Yards(Incty)	15%	21%	35%	17%	12%
13.Lincoln Park(Lkfnt)	5%	12%	24%	41%	18%

Similarly, more affluent respondents graded the schools more harshly than did lower income respondents; only 47% of those making over $40,000 per year considered Chicago schools average or above, while 68% of those with incomes of under $10,000 did so. Among these same lower income respondents, 83% rated the schools nationwide as average or above.

(Question # 5)

3. Student Preparation for World of Work

When asked if they considered Chicago public school children prepared for the world of work, only 51% felt they were. Among that bare majority, only four percent said they thought students were "well prepared." This evaluation of job-preparedness was held commonly by respondents of all types.

(Question # 9)

4. Condition of Schools in Neighborhoods

Two of three respondents felt the public schools in their neighborhoods were clean and neat (68%) and well-maintained (66%). However, respondents in different parts of the city felt differently on these questions. Those from the fringes of the city more frequently reported well-maintained buildings (74%) than did lakefront (68%) or inner city residents (62%). Among the particular districts, the southwest side neighborhoods (District 15) had the highest responses (77%) while in the near northwest Westtown area (District 5) a majority (52%) felt the buildings were not well-maintained. Similarly, more Hispanics (40%) felt buildings in their neighborhoods were poorly maintained than did blacks (35%) or whites (31%). More public school parents (70%) feel the schools are neat and well maintained than do parents of students in non-public schools (51%). (Question # 12)

5. Equal Educational Opportunities

Most respondents (57%) felt that the Chicago Public Schools do not provide equal educational opportunities for all students. However, there were sharp differences in the responses of racial groups to this question. A majority of whites (56%) and Hispanics (53%) felt equal opportunity was provided, but two-thirds of black respondents disagreed. (Question # 6)

6. Desire to Enroll in Non-public Schools

Perhaps the most troubling evaluation of all came from parents with children attending the Chicago Public Schools. Fully 69% said they would enroll their children in private schools, if they could afford it, primarily because they perceive non-public schools provide a better education in which students get more attention than in public schools. Thus, the public schools are "schools of choice" for only 31% of the families utilizing them.

Wealth is clearly a factor in family choice about school enrollment. Of parents of children in the public schools, 46% have annual incomes of under $10,000, and 79% are under $25,000. However, only 10% of parents with children in non-public schools receive less than $10,000, and 58% earn in excess of $25,000. Affluent parents (incomes over $40,000) choose private schools over public by a two to one margin. (Question # 28)

II. GRADING THE STAFF

1. The Teachers

When asked to grade teachers in Chicago, only 10 percent feel they are excellent. However, 80% of those surveyed feel public school teachers are average or above. Twenty percent feel Chicago teachers are below average.

Teachers	Above Average A	B	Average C	Below Average D	F
All responses	10%	27%	43%	13%	7%

Thus, Chicagoans rate public school teachers more highly than they do the schools as a whole, by more than twenty percentage points. But, they rate Chicago teachers much lower than other urbanites around the nation rated their teachers in the Gallup poll.

Teachers Nationwide	Above Average A	B	Average C	Below Average D	F
Urban Teachers	14%	41%	34%	8%	3%

More parents of public than private school children feel Chicago's public school teachers are average or above (81% vs. 71%). Correspondingly, more private than public school parents feel they are below average (29% vs. 19%). Teachers were graded most harshly in the Lincoln Park area (District 3), where 29% thought they were below normal, and least harshly in the northwest side Wicker Park area (District 6) where only 14% rated them below normal. About 13 percent of the blacks and Hispanics, in contrast to six percent of the whites, gave the Chicago Public School teachers an "A".

(Question # 5)

2. The Principals

Thirteen percent of those surveyed feel Chicago principals are excellent. A total of 77% feel they are average or above. About 23% of the respondents grade Chicago principals as below average.

Principals	Above Average A	B	Average C	Below Average D	F
All responses	13%	26%	38%	15%	8%

Once again, Chicagoans rate their principals more harshly than did the Gallup national sample. For Chicago, 39% were rated above average, compared with 53% nationally; 38% were rated average vs. 33% nationally; and 23% were below average, compared with 14% nationally. The Gallup survey did not report urban responses on the rating of principals.

Principals Nationwide	Above Average A	B	Average C	Below Average D	F
All responses	15%	38%	33%	9%	5%

More parents of public than private school children feel that the principals of Chicago are excellent (14% vs. 6%). More public than private school parents feel that the the principals of Chicago are average or above (77% vs. 62%). Thus, 38% of private school parents feel they are below average (compared to 23% for public school parents). On the whole, females gave principals better grades than did males; 40% of females rated them above average, while only 25% of males did so. Blacks (17%) and Hispanics (14%) gave Chicago principals an "A" more frequently than did whites (7%). Among parents of public school children, Hispanics rated principals excellent more frequently (19% vs about 13%), but otherwise racial distinctions among these parents were insignificant.

(Question # 5)

III. BIGGEST PROBLEMS FACING CHICAGO SCHOOLS

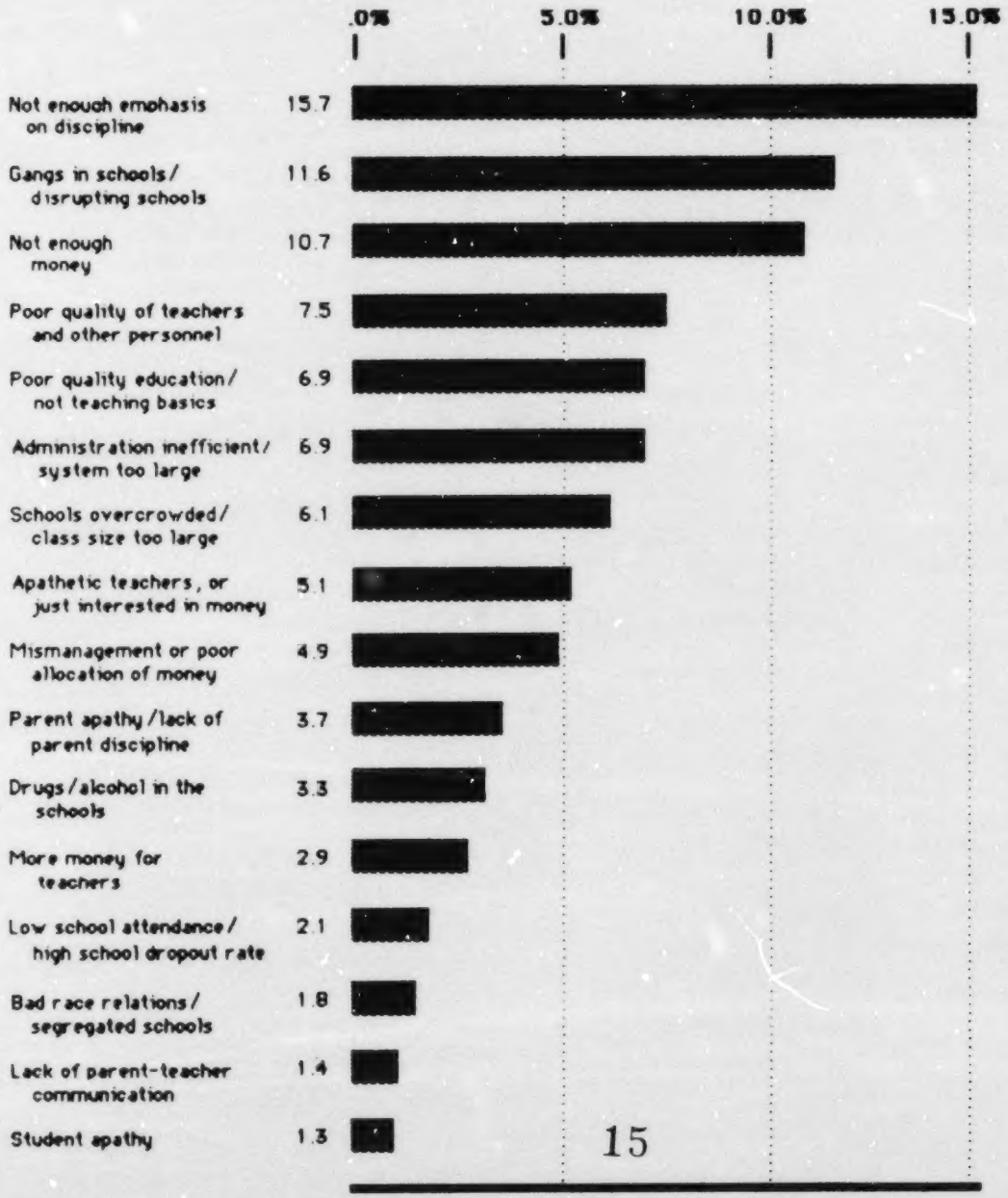
Respondents indicated that the three biggest problems facing Chicago Schools are that there is not enough emphasis on discipline (16%), gang disruption of schools (12%) and lack of money (11%). More than five percent said the biggest problem facing the Chicago Public Schools is that the quality of teachers and other personnel is poor, the quality of education is poor, the administration is costly and inefficient, the schools are overcrowded, or that teachers are apathetic.

Less than five percent of respondents feel the biggest problem in Chicago Schools is the mismanagement of available money, parental apathy concerning their child's education, drugs or alcohol in the schools, more money needed for teachers, low school attendence (truancy or dropout rate), bad race relations, the lack of communication between parents and teachers, the frequency of teacher strikes, and student apathy.

Less than one percent of the respondents feel the biggest problem facing Chicago Public Schools is the lack of innovative programs (e.g., computers/materials), the lack of communication between parents, teachers, and students, the poor maintenance of school property, the busing of children out of the neighborhood, or crimes not necessarily related to gangs. Only two percent feel that the Chicago Public Schools do not have a problem.

FIGURE 1

Biggest Problems Facing Chicago Schools



The national Gallup poll had some similar responses to the problems noted by Chicago respondents. Lack of discipline was deemed to be the single largest problem, with 27% or respondents choosing that category. However, the use of drugs was next with 18%, while less than four percent of Chicago respondents listed drugs as a major problem. Third on the national list was poor curriculum/poor standards (15%), followed by lack of proper financial support (14%), and difficulty in getting good teachers (14%).

When asked what the biggest problem facing Chicago schools is, more public school parents (17%) than private school parents (6%) or non-parents (9%) feel gangs and gang interference is primary. More inner city respondents (14%) feel the problem of gangs is most significant than do city fringe (9%) and lakefront respondents (7%). Similarly, Hispanic (20%) and black (16%) respondents gave top billing to the gang problem, while only 5% of whites saw it as the system's major problem.

After inadequate emphasis on discipline, which was high on the list of every group of Chicagoans, lakefront residents were more responsive to administrative issues. Lakefront respondents feel the schools do not receive enough money (15%). Lakefront respondents (14%) more frequently said administrative inefficiency is the biggest problem facing Chicago schools than did city fringe (8%) or inner city respondents (5%). More private than public parents of school children feel administrative inefficiency and mismanagement is the biggest problem facing Chicago public schools (9% vs. 4%). Inefficiency was also the top ranked problem for those earning more than $40,000 per year, followed by inadequate discipline and insufficient funding.

When asked for the biggest problems facing the schools, blacks slightly more often than other groups mentioned insufficient funds, drugs, and alcohol. Hispanics slightly more often mentioned gangs, overcrowding, and teacher strikes. Whites slightly more often than the other two groups mentioned more abstract problems such as mismanagement, administrative inefficiency, insufficient discipline, and the quality of education and personnel. (Question # 24)

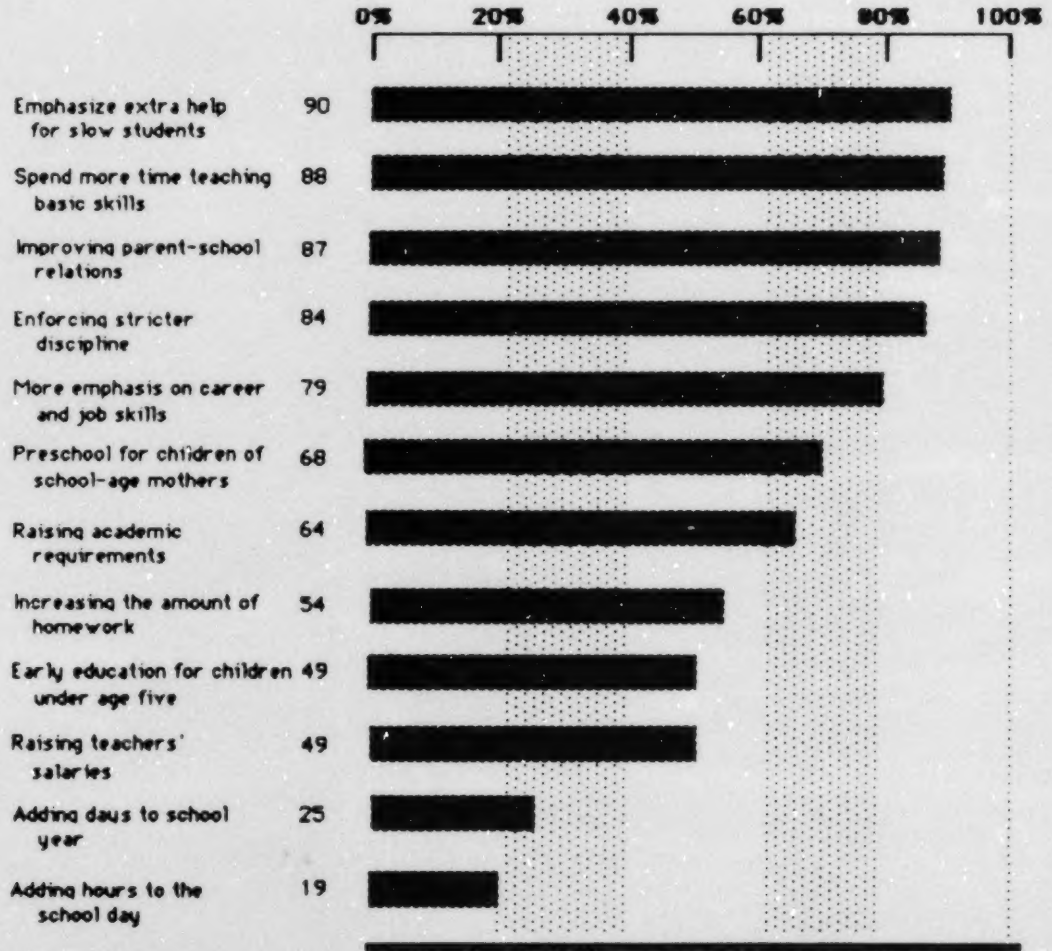
IV. PROPOSED REFORMS

1. Improving the Quality of Public School Education

To improve the quality of public schools more than 80% of Chicagoans support emphasizing extra help for slow students, increasing the time spent on teaching basic skills, improving parent/school relations, and enforcing stricter discipline. Over half of the respondents support placing more emphasis on career and job skills, providing preschool for the children of school-aged mothers, raising academic requirements, and increasing the amount of homework. Less than half of those surveyed feel that providing early education for children under the age of five, raising teachers' salaries, adding days to the school year, or adding hours to the school day is very important. Significant opposition was registered to three potential reforms, early childhood education (opposed by 24%), adding days (44%), and adding hours to the school day (55%).

FIGURE 2

Reform Choices Considered Very Important


0%
20%
40%
60%
80%
100%
Emphasize extra help for slow students 90
Spend more time teaching basic skills 88
Improving parent-school relations 87
Enforcing stricter discipline 84
More emphasis on career and job skills 79
Preschool for children of school-age mothers 68
Raising academic requirements 64
Increasing the amount of homework 54
Early education for children under age five 49
Raising teachers' salaries 49
Adding days to school year 25
Adding hours to the school day 19

Different constituencies within the city supported different reforms in differing degrees. Support was so overwhelming for emphasizing extra help for slow students (90% felt it was very important), spending more time teaching basic skills (88%), improving parent/school relationships (87%), and enforcing stricter discipline (84%) that only minor differences, primarily along racial lines, were noticed; blacks and Hispanics generally supported these ideas in larger numbers than did whites, but differences were minor.

Hispanics (86%) and blacks (85%) favored more emphasis on career and job skills than whites (70%). Similarly, inner city (82%) and city fringe (80%) neighborhoods supported this item more than lakefront residents (68%), as did poorer respondents (82%) as opposed to affluent (67%).

Providing preschool for the children of student mothers was considered very important by 68% of all respondents, but was supported much more by blacks (79%) and Hispanics (67%) than by whites (53%). Similarly, providing early childhood education for children under the age of five, while considered very important by only 49% of all respondents, was seen as much more important by blacks (64%) than whites (only 29% thought it very important while 39% thought it not at all important). Generally, early childhood education was considered more important by those who might benefit from it: inner city residents (58% vs. 35% for lakefront residents), females, and those whose annual income is under $10,000. Those with greater access to private preschools gave the idea less support, with Rogers Park (District 2) providing the least support (29%, with 42% thinking it not at all important).

Generally minorities provided more support for reforms designed to make schools tougher, either by raising academic requirements or increasing homework. The largely Hispanic near-northwest Wicker Park neighborhood (District 6) and the largely black southside neighborhood (District 13) found 74% supporting higher requirements, while the least support (57%) was found in the far southwest side Bogan school area (District 15). Increasing the amount of homework had more support among blacks (66%) and Hispanics (58%) than whites (36%), more support among the lower income respondents (66%) than among the affluent (41%). Two southside inner city neighborhoods (Districts 13 and 16) led in support of this idea (about 71%), while Rogers Park on the far north lakefront (District 2) gave it least support (31%). While few respondents supported adding either days to the school year or hours to the school day (and significant numbers thought both not important: 44% and 55% respectively) Hispanics and blacks generally were more willing to support these ideas than were whites.

Raising teacher salaries was thought very important by less than a majority (49%), but another 38% thought it somewhat important. Blacks (55%) thought raises were more important than did whites (41%), and this racial difference held true for all parental statuses. Similarly, lower income respondents gave this idea most support (55%) but least support came from the next higher ecomomic grouping, between $10,000 and $25,000 per year (45%). However, the largest difference on the question of raising teacher salaries was between two lakefront neighborhoods, Hyde Park (65%) and Rogers Park (42%). The neighborhoods on the fringe of the city also gave little support to raising teacher salaries (44%).

Blacks exceeded Hispanics and whites in considering stricter discipline, improving parent-school relations, raising academic requirements, raising teacher salaries, increasing the amount of homework, providing extra help for slow students, providing early education for children under five, and providing preschool for the children of school-aged mothers. Hispanics more often than the other groups advocated increased career and job skills, adding days to the school year, and adding hours to the school day. Whites exceeded neither of the other groups in recommending changes in school practices and programs.

(Question # 4)

2. Student Accountability

a. Requiring a Standard Examination

About 88% of the public believes that all high school students in the United States should be required to pass a standard examination in order to get a high school diploma. Nationally, according to the Gallup survey, only 69% support such an exam. (Question # 2)

b. Courses Required for Students Attending High School

When asked which courses should be required for high school students planning to attend college, 90 percent or more advocate English, mathematics, U.S. government, history, health education, and science. Eighty percent or more stress business and physical education. Vocational training and foreign languages received support from more than two-thirds of respondents. Less than half felt that art and music should be required for high school students planning to attend college.

For those not planning to attend college, fewer respondents would require history (89%), science (81%), foreign language (45%, the largest decrease of 22 percentage points), art (41%), and music (41%). Those subjects with more support included vocational training (up 16 points to 88%), business (up 2 points to 84%), and physical education (up 1 to 81%).

Courses Required of High School Students

Chicago Respondents	College Bound	Non-college Bound
English	99%	99%
Mathematics	96%	95%
U.S. Government	95%	93%
History	93%	89%
Health Education	91%	91%
Science	90%	81%
Business	82%	84%
Physical Education	80%	81%
Vocational Training	72%	84%
Foreign Language	67%	45%
Art	44%	41%
Music	43%	41%

English, mathematics, U.S. government, history, and health education are clearly seen as the core of requirements for high school students by nearly all respondents. Science, physical education, and, surprisingly, even for college bound youth, business, also have wide support. Vocational training has unexpected support for college bound youth. Foreign languages, while diminished for non-college bound youth, still had larger than expected support as a requirement for these students. Art and music are not seen as required courses by most respondents.

Nationally, fewer respondents would require many of these courses for graduation.

Nationwide Respondents	College Bound	Non-college Bound
English	94%	90%
Mathematics	96%	92%
History/U.S. Government	84%	71%
Health Education	52%	50%
Science	84%	61%
Business	68%	76%
Physical Education	43%	44%
Vocational Training	37%	83%
Foreign Language	57%	19%
Art	24%	18%
Music	22%	18%

Sharper differences for college bound and non-college bound are present in the national sample, especially for business and vocational training courses. Physical Education, art, and music are rated much less important nationally.

FIGURE 3

Courses Required of High School Students

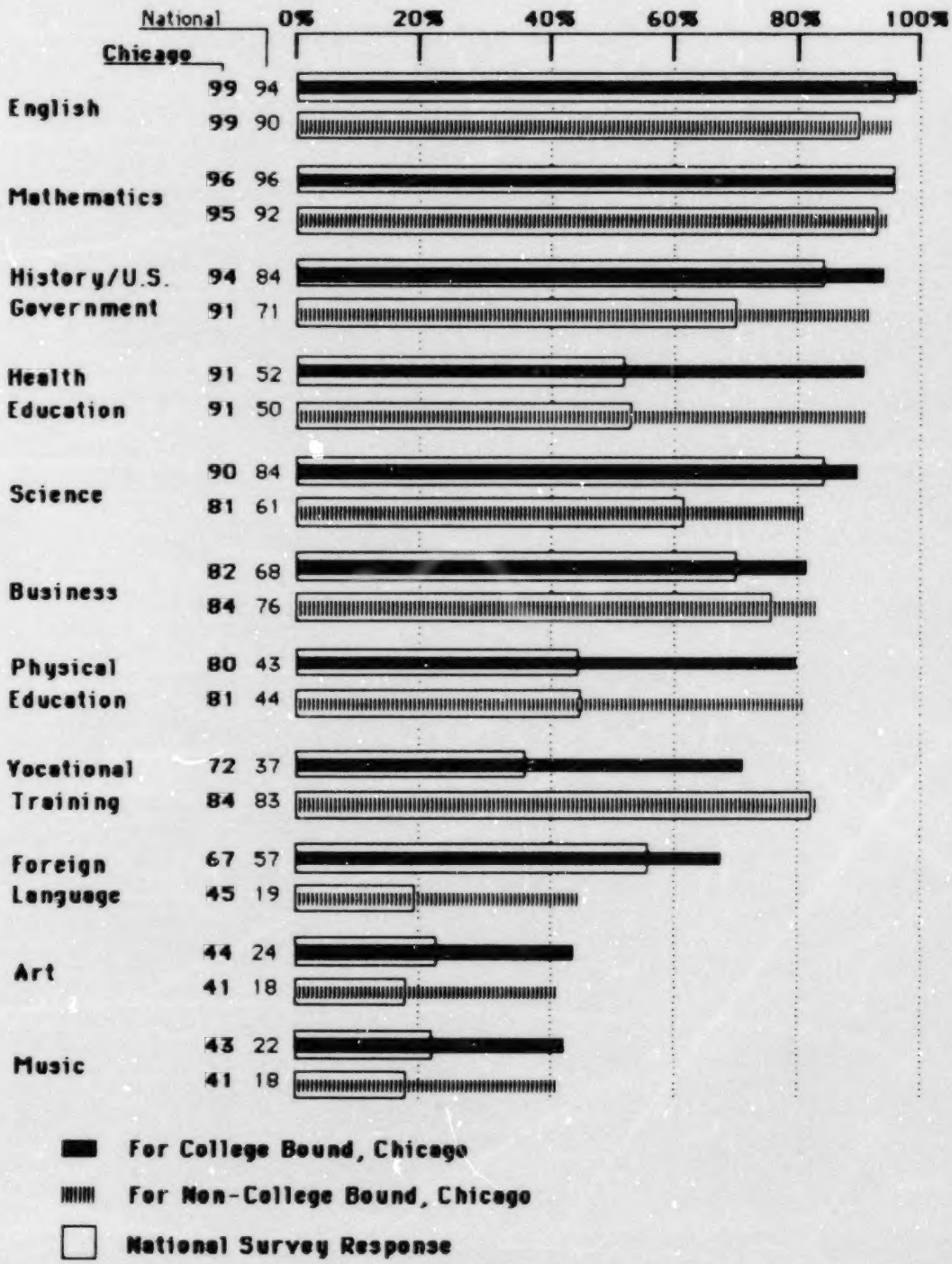
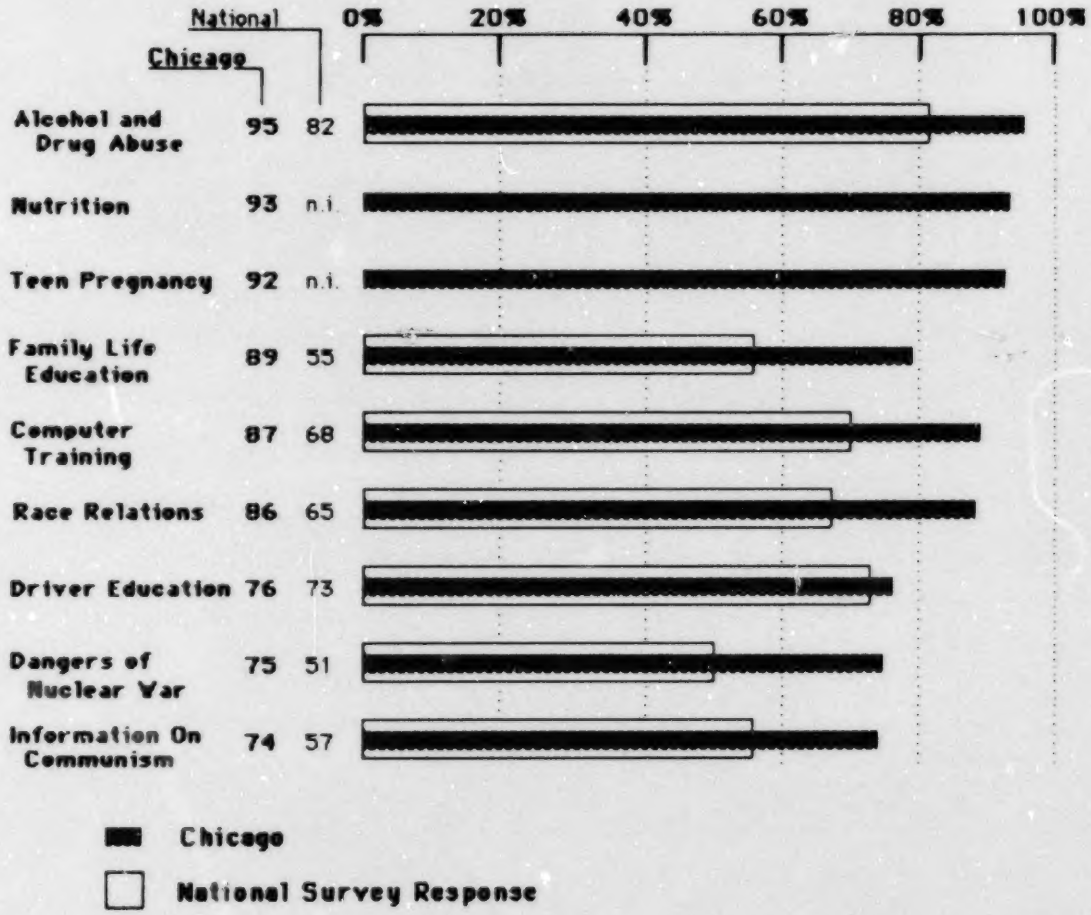


FIGURE 4

Other Instruction That Should Be Required



There were few differences between parents of public school versus private school children on course requirements. More of the public than private school parents (87% vs. 82%) feel that business is essential for college bound students. Vocational training was also supported by more parents of children in public schools than private (80% vs. 67%). Public school parents also gave added support for art for non-college bound youth (46% vs. 36%).

There were virtually no differences among any sub-groups of respondents about English, math, government, and history. Inner city residents provided more support for health and physical education, for business and vocational education, for music, and for foreign languages for all students than did residents of other parts of the city. Residents of the city fringe neighborhoods provided least support for requiring health, foreign language, art, and music. Lakefront residents were least likely to require physical education, business, or vocational training courses.

Among the six course areas with support of less than 90%, lower income respondents were more ready to require these courses than were those who were more affluent, including foreign language. This was true for both college bound and non-college bound students.

Blacks more often than Hispanics and whites favored foreign languages, science, history, art, music, health education, and physical education for all students. Hispanics exceeded blacks and whites in advocating business and vocational training courses for college bound youth, and foreign language for non-college bound youth. In no other statistically significant case did Hispanics and whites exceed blacks with respect to advocating more courses for high school students. (Question # 3)

3. Instructional Mandates

a. Other Areas of Instruction

In addition to regular courses, more than 85% of all respondents feel public high schools in Chicago should offer courses in alcohol and drug abuse, nutrition, teen pregnancy, family life education, computer training, and race relations. Approximately three-quarters of those surveyed advocate courses in driver education, the dangers in nuclear technology, and information about communism and socialism.

OTHER REQUIRED INSTRUCTION

	Chicago	Nationally
Alcohol and Drug Abuse	95%	82%
Nutrition	93%	Not included
Teen Pregnancy	92%	n.i.
Family Life Education	89%	55%
Computer Training	87%	68%
Race Relations	86%	65%
Driver Education	76%	73%
Dangers of Nuclear Technology	75%	51%
Communism and Socialism	74%	57%

Once again, more Chicago respondents would require additional areas of instruction than would respondents nationally. It should be noted that the Gallup categories did not exactly match those used in this survey at two points: Gallup used the categories "Parenting/parent training" rather than "Family Life Education," and "Dangers of nuclear war" which was modified in this survey to "Dangers of Nuclear Technology." Thus, the answers on these two items are not strictly comparable.

More public than private school parents or non-parents feel public high schools in Chicago should offer coures in nutrition, teen pregnancy, family life, computers, race relations, the dangers of nuclear technology, and communism and socialism. Similarly, low income families supported such courses (substituting drivers education for teen pregnancy) more than more affluent respondents.

More inner city respondents than city fringe or lakefront residents feel courses should be offered in family life, computers, race relations, and driver education. Blacks and Hispancis exceeded whites in advocating courses in all these areas plus nutrition, teen pregnancy, the dangers of nuclear technology, and communism and socialism. (Question # 7)

b. Extracurricular Activities

When asked their opinion about extracurricular activities such as the school band, dramatics, sports, and the school paper, 43% of respondents feel they are very important. Another 47% feel they are somewhat important. Only ten percent feel they are not too important or not important at all. Lakefront residents, led by those from Hyde Park and Rogers Park, were more likely to think these activities very important (52%) than inner city (43%) or city fringe respondents (39%).

(Question # 8)

4. Student Attendance

a. Compulsory Attendance Ages

About half of Chicagoans (49%) think that children should start school at an earlier age than they do currently. Far more blacks and Hispanics than whites advocated an earlier age for children to start school (60% and 59% vs. 29%). More public school parents than private or non-parents feel children should start school at an earlier age (57% vs. about 44%); parents with children not yet in school also favored an earlier start by 53%. More people from the inner city (56%) think children should start school at an earlier age than do residents of the lakefront (42%) or the city fringe (37%). Lower income respondents (60%) were more favorable than more affluent ones (40%).

Less than five percent believe that children should be allowed to quit school before they are 16 years old. In fact, 85% believe they should be required to remain in school beyond the age of 16. When asked if children should be required to stay in school later than 16, more people in the inner city and the fringe (87% and 86%) than on the lakefront (76%) said yes, with Rogers Park residents (32% opposed to the higher age) most willing to allow students to leave school earlier. More Hispanics (91%) and blacks (89%) supported requiring students to stay in school past age 16 (vs. 79% for whites). (Question # 1)

b. Early Childhood Education

Less than half of all respondents thought it very important to provide early childhood education for children under five years of age. Another quarter of respondents felt it was somewhat important, while a quarter thought it was not at all important.

In improving the quality of public school education, how important is providing early childhood education for children under the age of five?

Very important	49%
Somewhat important	27%
Not at all important	24%

Early childhood education was seen as much more important by blacks (64%) than whites, among whom only 29% thought it was very important. Indeed, 39% of white respondents thought early childhood education was not at all important. Generally, early childhood education was considered more important by those who might benefit from it: inner city residents, females, and the poor. Those with greater access to private preschools gave the idea less support; only 43% of affluent respondents supported

the idea, while less than 40% of those living along the city fringe or the lakefront did so. About a third of the residents of these areas thought the idea not at all important.

	Fringe	Lakefnt	Inner
Very important	40%	35%	58%
Somewhat important	29%	31%	25%
Not at all important	31%	35%	18%

Interestingly, there was much more support for providing preschool for the children of student mothers, so they could complete their schooling; 68% of all respondents thought this was very important. Again, those communities more likely to benefit gave the idea more support: blacks (79%) and Hispanics (67%) as compared with whites (53%). (Question # 4k)

c. Lengthen School Day/Year

Although there have been several national studies which recommend lengthening the school day and the school year as the most important reform of education in America, Chicagoans did not agree. Only a quarter of respondents felt either of these ideas very important, and the largest group of respondents to both questions felt more school time was not at all important to improving the quality of education.

In improving the quality of public school education, how important is adding:

	Days to school year	Hours to school day
Very important	25%	19%
Somewhat important	31%	26%
Not at all important	44%	55%

In the national Gallup survey, respondents were asked whether they favored or opposed these ideas. Nationwide, 47% favored lengthening the school year and 45% favored lengthening the school day. However, among urbanites, 55% favored a longer year and 52% favored a longer day. If very important and somewhat important responses are considered favorable replies, Chicagoans are like other urbanites on a longer year, but differ on the longer day. (Question # 4 i & j)

5. Personnel Evaluation and Duties

a. Teacher Certification

In addition to meeting college requirements for a teacher's certificate, 95% of those surveyed feel teachers should be required to pass an examination to prove their knowledge in the subjects they will teach before they are hired.

b. Teacher Evaluation

Of those surveyed, 59% support the evaluation of teachers by other experienced teachers in the Chicago Public Schools. Although all racial groups supported peer review, Hispanics (68%) most strongly favored it, with whites next (62%), and blacks (though still a majority at 56%) least. Parents whose children are not yet in school were most enthusiastic about teacher evaluation (74% favorable) while private school parents gave least support (53%). (Question # 15)

c. Teacher Tenure

Most respondents (62%) favored the current practice of granting permanent jobs to teachers and administrators after three years of acceptable service in the Chicago Public Schools. Thirty-eight percent of those questioned were against this process. More parents of public (69%) than private school children (56%) or non-parents (60%) support this process. Inner city (68%) and fringe (58%) respondents support this procees, while a majority of lakefront residents (55%) oppose the granting of tenure. Blacks (72% for) and Hispanics (63%) support tenure or relatively permanent jobs for teachers after three years of service, while a majority of whites (53%) oppose the idea. Differences among respondents were most sharp on the basis of annual income:

Teacher Tenure	For	Against
Under $10,000	74%	26%
Under 25,000	60%	40%
Under 40,000	53%	47%
Over 40,000	38%	62%

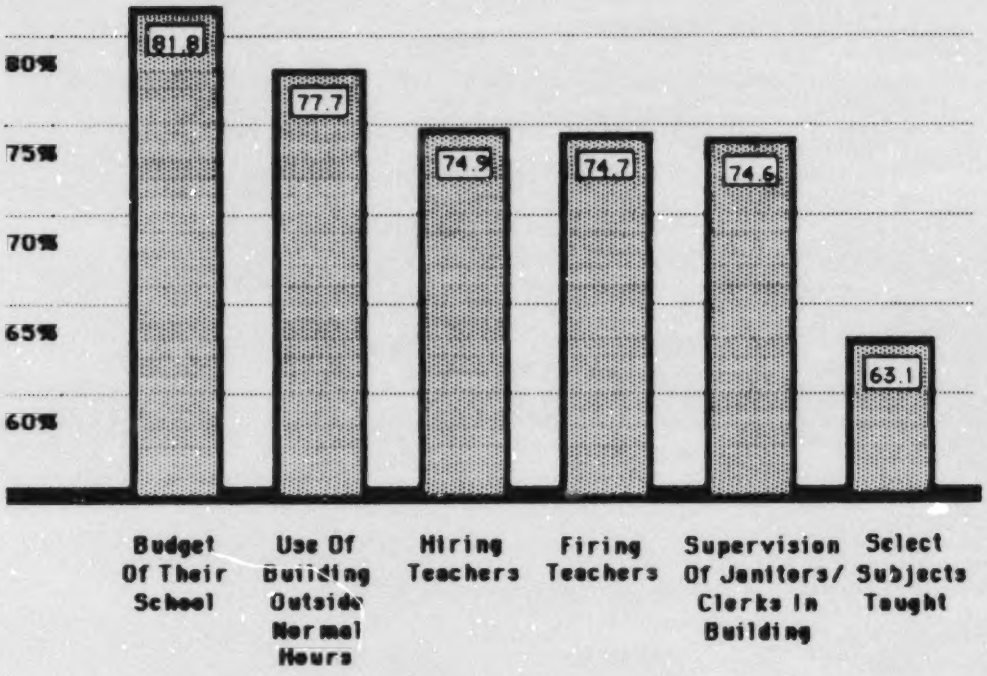
(Question # 17)

d. More Control for Principals

Chicago Public School principals currently have little control over certain decisions in their schools. About three-fourths of respondents feel they should have control over the budget of their particular school (82%), uses of the building outside normal hours (78%), hiring and firing of teachers (75 percent), and the supervision of non-teaching staff. Sixty-one percent feel they should have control over the selection of subjects taught.

FIGURE 5

Expanding the Principal's Powers



There was little variance among respondents in their support for the principal's control of the school budget or use of the school building. On other areas, there were differences among racial groups, areas of the city, and income. More whites than blacks feel principals should have more control over the hiring of teachers (78% vs. 72%), and the firing of teachers (83% vs. 70%). Hispanics agreed with whites on hiring (78%) but were less supportive of control over firing teachers (71%). Hispanics (72%) and blacks (67%) were more supportive of control over subjects taught than were whites (55%). Inner city residents were more reluctant to give control over hiring and firing (though 72% supported both) but more willing to grant control of the curriculum than residents of the lakefront or city fringe areas. Only 51% of lakefront residents thought principals should control the selection of courses offered at a school. On the basis of income, there was no disagreement about the ability to hire teachers, but more affluent respondents were even more supportive of the ability to fire teachers (82% favorable). Lower income respondents were more supportive of control over non-teaching staff (79%). The most significant differences were over control of subjects taught; 72% of those with incomes under $10,000 would give principals this power while 53% of those making over $40,000 would not.

(Question # 23)

6. Personnel Compensation

a. Teacher Salaries

When asked about the salaries for public school teachers in Chicago, over half of the respondents (53%) feel that teacher salaries are just about right. Seven percent feel they are too high. Forty percent feel they are too low. These figures are similar to those found in the national Gallup survey where 48% feel teacher salaries are just about right for their community, 8% think they are too high, and 44% feel they are too low.

The major differences over teacher salary levels reflect differences in annual income. The more affluent the respondent, the more likely they would think salaries are too low:

Annual Income	About Right	Too Low	Too High
Under $10,000	60%	32%	8%
Under 25,000	50%	42%	8%
Under 40,000	45%	47%	8%
Over 40,000	43%	52%	5%

Correspondingly, lakefront residents (49%) are more likely to think salaries are too low than city fringe (53%) or inner city (55%) respondents. (Question # 18)

b. Merit Pay Programs

Some states have recently adopted merit pay programs which would provide additional pay for outstanding teacher performance. Most respondents (79%) were in favor of this approach, comparable to national favorable responses of 75%. In Chicago, whites (83%) were slightly more favorable. More affluent respondents (86%) were also more likely to support merit pay than were those with lower incomes (77%). Correspondingly, lakefront neighborhoods were slightly more favorable (82%) than inner city areas (78%), but all these differences were slight. (Question # 16)

c. Differential Pay for Teachers

Today there is a shortage of teachers in science, math, technical and vocational subjects. If local schools needed such teachers, nearly two-thirds (65%) of respondents would support paying teachers of these subjects higher wages than teachers in other subjects. Nationally, only 53% would give extra pay for teachers in short supply. Lower income respondents (68%) would be more willing to offer more pay to teachers in demand than affluent respondents (59%). More Hispanics (73%) than blacks (66%) or whites (61%) recommend differential pay. (Question # 14)

d. Rank of Salaries in Use of Additional Dollars

When Chicagoans were given a set of alternatives on which to spend possible additional funds, if they should be provided to the public schools. Raising teacher salaries, though supported by 53% of respondents, was the least preferred choice (see on, Section V.3). Affluent respondents (59%) were more supportive than those who were poorer (51%); thus, not surprisingly, lakefront neighborhoods were much more favorable (66%) than inner city (53%) or city fringe (50%) areas. (Question # 22)

e. Binding Arbitration

If an agreement cannot be reached between a teachers' union and the school board, 89% of those questioned would require the dispute to be settled by an arbitrator. (Question # 24)

7. Community Affairs

a. Participation in School Affairs

When asked if they participated in the affairs of their local school, almost one-third (31%) responded affirmatively (30% of those surveyed had children in the public schools). Parents of public school children (66%) reported participating much more frequently than other groups (16%); two-thirds of public school parents reported they do participate in the affairs of their local public school.

Hispanics (43%) and blacks (40%) reported much higher levels of participation than whites (15%), which reflects differences among non-parents, for the most part. There are only small differences in participation, racially, among public school parents. More affluent respondents (26%) participated less frequently than poorer ones (38%), but this reflects the lower proportion of affluent families with children in the public schools (only 15%). More inner city residents (36%) said their participate at their local school than city fringe (25%) or lakefront (22%) respondents.

Of those who participate in the affairs of their local school, two-thirds participate in the PTA, 65% do so through volunteer programs, and one-fourth (26%) participate in the local advisory or bilingual council.

Almost three-fourths of participating public school parents report doing so through the PTA. Non-parents and parents of children in private schools, when they are active, are less likely to participate in the PTA (52%). City fringe (72%) and

inner city (67%) respondents participated through the PTA more than lakefront residents (53%). More blacks (70%) than whites and Hispanics (59% and 58%) participate through the PTA. More Hispanics than blacks and whites, however, reported participating in local school advisory or bilingual councils (38% vs. 27% and 17%). (Question # 11)

b. Public Information Available

When asked how well-informed public school parents were kept by the schools their children attended, two-thirds felt well informed about their child's programs and progress, but less than half felt they received enough information about how the local school works or how the system works.

How well informed?	Very Well	Not too Well	Not at all well
a. child's program	67%	22%	11%
b. child's progress	68%	24%	8%
c. how school works	49%	35%	15%
d. how system works	40%	38%	22%

Generally, lower income respondents felt less well-informed than those who were more affluent, both about their own child's affairs and the workings of the local school. However, more low income parents (42%) reported being informed about how the school system works than middle-class ($25 - $40,000) parents (29%). Black and Hispanic parents (42%) feel better informed than do white parents (30%). Males reported being less informed about the workings of both schools and the system by about six percentage points. (Question # 29)

V. FINANCES

1. Amount Provided

Over half of all respondents (57%) said that not enough money is provided to run the Chicago schools. Twenty-nine percent feel the schools do receive enough, while only 14% of the respondents said that the Chicago Public Schools receive more than enough money.

Not surprisingly, more public school parents (66%) than others feel the schools do not get enough money, but even a majority of parents of private school children (52%) and non-parents (53%) think this.

When asked if the amount provided is:	Not Enough	Enough	More than Enough
Non-parents	53%	31%	16%
Private school parents	52%	26%	22%
Parents of young children	61%	28%	11%
Public school parents	66%	25%	9%

Although lower income respondents (60%) were more likely to feel the schools do not receive enough money, even a majority (52%) of the affluent (incomes over $40,000) agree. A majority of whites feel the schools receive either enough (35%) or more than enough (24%) money to run the schools. Blacks (67%) and Hispanics (62%) disagree. These differences pertained primarily among non-public school parents, but even white parents (53%) were less likely to feel the schools needed more money than blacks and Hispanics (69% each). More inner city (61%) and lakefront (58%) residents said there was not enough money than did city fringe residents (48%). (Question # 20)

2. Tax Sources of Additional Monies

If more money were needed for the Chicago Public Schools, it could come from different kinds of taxes. While none of the options were supported by a majority of respondents, raising the state income tax was more preferred than other options. Forty-two percent of the respondents feel more money should come from a higher state income tax. Approximately one-third (33% and 32% respectively) would support a new city income tax or a higher sales tax. Only 21% support a higher property tax.

Generally, parents with children in the public schools were more supportive of all the tax options than were others, except that parents of children not in school were slightly more supportive of an increase in the sales tax. Preferences for each parental status followed the general order, with increasing the state income tax at the top of the list. Parental support for an increase in the state income tax was 53% for Hispanics, 50% for whites, and 49% for blacks. (Question # 24)

3. Use of Additional Dollars

If more money were available to the Chicago Public Schools, most respondents feel it should be allocated to provide more textbooks and supplies (95%) and to repair school buildings and maintain school grounds (92%). Over three-fourths of respondents feel the money should go to add more special programs (81%) and to lower class size (79%). Only 53% feel that additional money should be used to raise teacher salaries.

When asked to rank their choices, almost one-third would prefer to lower class size (31%) and another third would prefer providing more textbooks and supplies (30%). Less than 15 percent would use the money to repair school buildings and maintain school grounds, add more special programs, or raise teachers' salaries.

If more money were available, parents of public school children would be more likely to want it spent for textbooks and supplies or for special programs. Private school parents would give more support to lowering class size, while non-parents would be more supportive of raising teacher salaries (58%) than would public school parents (49%). Correspondingly, lakefront districts (66%) were more supportive of using additional money to raise teacher salaries than were inner city (53%) or city fringe (50%) districts. Inner city residents were more supportive than other areas of adding special programs or lowering class size. Hispanics (92%) were particularly interested in putting additional dollars into special programs, as were blacks (81%), compared to 68% of whites who favored this use. (Question # 22)

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS AND PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENTS

This Public Opinion Survey about the Chicago Public Schools drew on a sample of 1,816 adults over 18 years of age. Respondents were chosen by random dialing selection from the school system's 20 sub-districts.

Two-thirds of those interviewed were female (67%). Blacks were 53% of the respondents, whites 37%, Hispanics 8%, others 2%. In age, the median person was 43 years of age; 20% were over 60, and 23% were under 30. The largest age group of respondents (25%) was between 31 and 40. Of the sample, 93% were registered voters.

In education, 23% had not completed high school, 34% were high school graduates, 23% had some years in college, 11% were college graduates, and 9% had some graduate education or an advanced degree. In income, 35% had pre-tax annual incomes of less than $10,000, 33% had incomes between $10,000 and $25,000, 21% had incomes between $25,000 and $40,000, and 11% were over $40,000.

Over half of those surveyed (53%) had no children. Among households with children the average was 2.1 per family. Of these families, 16% had children who were not in school. Among families with children in school, 75% had children in the public schools, 31% had children in parochial or private schools; 8% had children in both. White respondents were nearly twice as likely to be childless; 70% had no children, 23% had one or two children, and only 7% had three or more. Among blacks, 44% were childless, 40% had one or two children, and 16% had three or more. Hispanics had larger families; only 33% were without children, 37% had one or two, and 30% had three or more. White children were less likely to attend public school; 50% of white parents had children in the public schools, compared to 82% of black parents and 80% of Hispanic parents. Thus, 63% of public school parents were black, 20% were white, 15% were Hispanic, and 2% were other, figures which are similar to the systemwide racial census of the public schools. Among private school parents, 51% were white, 35% black, 9% Hispanic, and 5% other.

White respondents generally have more education than blacks or Hispanics:

Highest grade	White	Black	Hispanic
Non-high school graduate	14%	28%	31%
High school graduate	37%	32%	39%
Some college	19%	27%	17%
College graduate	15%	8%	7%
Graduate school	15%	5%	6%

Parents with more education are more likely to have enrolled their child in private schools. Among those parents who had not finished high school, 88% have children in the public schools, while among college graduates, only 54% have children in the public schools and 46% were utilizing private schools. Public school parents are, generally, less educated:

Public School Parents Highest Grade	White	Black	Hispanic
Non-high school graduate	10%	28%	41%
High school graduate	38%	35%	42%
Some college	26%	29%	13%
College graduate	11%	6%	3%
Graduate school	15%	2%	1%

Public school parents are less wealthy than are private school parents. The higher the annual family income, the less likely it is that children will be attending public schools:

Family income All respondents	Under $10,000	Under $25,000	Under $40,000	Over $40,000
Attend public school	93%	76%	61%	37%

Among public school parents, 46% have incomes under $10,000 annually, and 79% have incomes of less than $25,000. Only 10% of private school parents have incomes under $10,000, and 58% made more than $25,000. Income also relates to family size; those parents with income under $10,000 average 2.4 children per family, with the average steadily decreasing to 1.8 per family over $40,000.

Education and income are clearly related. Those with lower incomes, generally, have had less education.

Highest Grade All respondents	Under $10,000	Under $25,000	Under $40,000	Over $40,000
Non-high school grad	41%	15%	9%	1%
High school graduate	36%	40%	26%	23%
Some college	16%	29%	31%	24%
College graduate	4%	11%	19%	24%
Graduate school	3%	6%	15%	28%

Among those who had graduated from college, 12% had incomes under $10,000, 26% under $25,000, 34% under $40,000, and 28% over $40,000.

White respondents were wealthier than black or Hispanic respondents.

Race	Under $10,000	Under $25,000	Under $40,000	Over $40,000
White	21%	35%	26%	18%
Black	44%	31%	17%	8%
Hispanic	39%	41%	15%	5%

Wealth is unevenly distributed across the city. In the inner city areas, 42% of the residents had annual incomes of under $10,000, while only 23% made more than $25,000. On the city fringes, 25% received less than $10,000 while 42% received more than $25,000. Lakefront areas had similar figures of 26% and 42% respectively. The picture is even more dramatic in the school system's sub-districts. In two districts, those including the Lincoln Park neighborhood (District 3) and the Morgan Park area on the far southside (District 18) a majority of respondents made over $25,000 a year. On the other hand, in three districts, #9 and #10 on the near westside and #13 on the southside, more than 60% of those interviewed had incomes under $10,000 (62%, 60%, and 69% respectively). Thus, the background of students attending the public schools in different parts of the city is dramatically different.

CONCLUSION

As intended, this report and the accompanying tables provide an immense amount of information. On some points (referred to in the highlights), there seems to be a substantial consensus on the problems, prospects, and reforms of education in the nation and in Chicago. On others, some small to moderate differences among the various groups can be noted.

It is hoped that parents, educators, citizens, and policy makers will discuss these and other findings about our schools. And it is further hoped that combining such findings and their own opinions, interpretations, and judgements, they will continue to reform and improve schools in Chicago, the State of Illinois, and in the nation.

APPENDIX

TECHNICAL METHODOLOGY

The survey population was defined as all male or female heads of household age 18 or older living in telephone households in the city of Chicago. A random digit dialing sample was selected under a disproportionately stratified cluster sample design. Each of the twenty school sub-districts was defined as a stratum; and the sample was allocated across strata to obtain approximately equal numbers of interviews per stratum. The rationale for this allocation was to minimize the standard errors of differences between stratum sample estimates.

Within each stratum, clusters of telephone numbers were generated using the following steps:

a) From neighborhood telephone directories covering each stratum, a simple random sample of phone numbers was selected. Each phone number was the basis for a cluster.

b) Each of these phone number's location was checked on a map to ensure it was within the stratum boundaries.

c) A fixed set of phone numbers (cluster size = 6) was then generated by randomly assigning the last two digits of the selected phone number.

d) The sample generated in step "c" was given to the field section, with the "expected" stratum noted.

e) Based on information from the respondent, the sample number was coded into an "actual" stratum for sample control purposes.

Because of this disproportionate allocation of the sample, the probabilities of selection differ by school district: households in larger school districts are undersampled relative to those in smaller districts. In order to combine data across districts for population estimates, the use of appropriate weights is necessary to correct these unequal chances of selection. These weights are given in the table below.

Sample weights by School District

District	Weight	District	Weight
1	1.71	11	0.89
2	1.49	12	1.09
3	2.35	13	0.97
4	1.35	14	1.00
5	1.21	15	0.79
6	1.55	16	0.67
7	0.58	17	0.74
8	0.71	18	0.89
9	0.68	19	0.56
10	0.70	20	0.27

The final disposition of the sample is given below.

Eligible	n	Percent
interviews	1,816	65%
refusals	621	22
unavailable	327	12
other eligible	20	1
totals	2,784	100%
Ineligible		
non-residential	1,131	
other non-working	341	
Eligibility unknown		
non-contacts	255	
Total sample	4,511	

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you think as a way to improve public school education:

   a. children should start school at an earlier age than they currently do?

Yes	48.7%
No	51.3

   b. children should be allowed to quit school before they are 16?

Yes	4.1%
No	95.9

   c. children should be required to stay in school later than 16?

Yes	85.5%
No	14.5

2. Should all high school students in the United States be required to pass a standard examination in order to get a high school diploma, or not?

Yes	87.9%
No	12.1

3. a. In your opinion, should all public high school students planning to attend college be required to take . . .

	Yes	No
[1] Mathematics?	96.1%	3.9%
[2] Foreign language?	66.9	33.1
[3] Science?	91.0	9.0
[4] History?	92.5	7.5
[5] US Government?	94.9	5.1
[6] English?	99.6	.4
[7] Art?	44.4	55.6
[8] Business?	81.8	18.2
[9] Music?	43.2	56.8
[10] Health education?	91.2	8.8
[11] Vocational training?	72.2	27.8
[12] Physical education?	80.3	19.7

   b. Now, what about public high school students who do not plan to go on to college. Should they be required to take . . .

	Yes	No
[1] Mathematics?	94.7%	5.3%
[2] Foreign language?	45.3	54.7
[3] Science?	81.5	18.5
[4] History?	89.2	10.8
[5] US Government?	92.6	7.4
[6] English?	98.5	1.5
[7] Art?	41.3	58.7
[8] Business?	83.9	16.1
[9] Music?	40.5	59.5
[10] Health education?	91.0	9.0
[11] Vocational training?	87.8	12.2
[12] Physical education?	81.0	19.0

4. Please tell me how important each of the following are in improving the quality of public school education.

		Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not at all Important
a.	Spend more time teaching basic skills? Is that . .	88.4%	10.6%	1.0%
b.	Enforcing stricter discipline? Is that . . .	84.1	13.6	2.1
c.	Improving parent/school relations?	86.9	11.9	1.2
d.	More emphasis on career and job skills?	79.4	18.4	2.1
e.	Raising academic requirements?	64.3	30.4	5.3
f.	Raising teachers' salaries?	49.3	37.9	12.8
g.	Increasing the amount of homework?	54.0	35.3	10.8
h.	Emphasizing extra help for slow students	89.9	8.9	1.2
i.	Adding days to the school year?	25.1	30.7	44.2
j.	Adding hours to the school day?	19.2	26.0	54.7
k.	Providing early education for children under the age of five?	49.4	26.9	23.7
l.	Providing preschool for the children of school-aged mothers?	68.1	24.0	8.0

5. Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the PUBLIC schools were graded in the same way. What grade would you give . . .

		A	B	C	D	FAIL
a.	the public schools nationwide?	7.0%	21.6%	50.9%	14.9%	5.5%
b.	the public schools in Chicago?	5.8	14.3	39.3	26.6	14.0
c.	teachers in Chicago? .	10.4	27.1	43.0	12.6	6.9
d.	principals in Chicago?	13.0	25.6	38.6	15.1	7.6

6. In your opinion, do the Chicago Public Schools provide equal educational opportunities for all studies?

Yes	40.8%
No	54.2

7. In addition to regular courses, public high schools in Chicago offer instruction in other areas. Please tell me whether you feel the following should or should not be required for all high school students.

		Yes	No
a.	Driver education	75.5%	24.5%
b.	Computer training	86.8	13.2
c.	Information about alcohol and drug abuse	95.0	5.0
d.	Dangers of nuclear technology	74.6	25.4
e.	Information about communism and socialism	74.3	25.7
f.	Race relations	86.1	13.9
g.	Nutrition	92.9	7.1
h.	Family life education	89.4	10.6
i.	Teen pregnancy	92.4	7.6

8. I'd like your opinion about extracurricular activities such as the school band, dramatics, sports, and the school paper. Are these . . .

Very important,	43.5%
Somewhat important,	46.9
Not too important, or	7.7
Not at all important?	2.0

9. Do you think Chicago Public School students are well-prepared, somewhat prepared, or poorly prepared for the world of work?

Well-prepared	3.5%
Somewhat prepared	47.8
Poorly prepared	48.7

10. In general, how satisfied are you with the education children are receiving in the Chicago Public Schools? Would you say you are . . .

Very satisfied,	4.5%
Somewhat satisfied, or	56.5
Not at all satisfied?	39.0

11. a. Do you participate in the affairs of your local public school?

Yes	30.6%
No	69.4

b. Do you participate through . . .

	Yes	No
[1] the PTA?	66.6%	33.3%
[2] the local advisory or bilingual council?	26.4	73.6
[3] the volunteer programs?	64.6	35.4

12. Are the public schools in your neighborhood . . .

		Yes	No
a.	clean and neat?	67.9%	32.1%
b.	well-maintained?	66.3	33.7

13. In addition to meeting college requirements for a teacher's certificate, should teachers be required to pass an examination to prove their knowledge in the subjects they will teach before they are hired?

Yes	95.1%
No	4.9

14. Today there is a shortage of teachers in science, math, technical, and vocational subjects. If your local schools needed such teachers, would you be for or against paying them higher wages then teachers of other subjects?

For	65.0%
Against	35.0

15. In some communities, teachers are evaluated by other experienced teachers. Are you for or against using this method in the Chicago Public Schools?

For	59.4%
Against	40.6

16. Some states have recently adopted merit pay programs which would provide additional pay for outstanding teacher performance. In general, are you for or against this idea?

For	79.2%
Against	20.8

17. Currently, teachers and administrators in the Chicago Public Schools are granted permanent jobs after three years of service. Are you for or against this?

For	61.6%
Against	38.4

18. Do you think that salaries for public school teachers in Chicago are . . .

Too high,	7.8%
Too low, or	39.8
Just about right?	52.9

19. If an agreement cannot be reached between a teachers' union and the school board, would you be for or against a requirement that the dispute be settled by an arbitrator?

For	88.8%
Against	11.2

20. Would you say the amount of money provided to run the Chicago Public School is . . .

More than enough,	14.1%
Enough, or	28.8
Not enough?	57.1

21. a. If more money were needed for the Chicago Public Schools, it could come from different kinds of taxes. Do you think it should come from the following . . . (Begin with starred item first.)

	Yes	No
[1] a higher state income tax?	43.1%	56.9%
[2] a new city income tax?	32.9%	67.1%
[3] a higher sales tax?	32.0%	68.0%
[4] a higher property tax?	21.8%	78.2%

b. You have said (Read each category that was answered "Yes"). Which of these do you prefer?

1 = 38.9%
2 = 22.7%
3 = 26.6%
4 = 11.8%

22 a. If more money were available to the Chicago Public Schools, should it be spent for the following . . .

	Yes	No
[1] to raise teachers' salaries? . . .	54.1%	45.9%
[2] to repair school buildings and maintain school grounds?	91.6	8.4
[3] to provide more textbooks and supplies?	94.5	5.5
[4] to add more special programs? . .	80.5	19.5
[5] to lower class size?	78.8	21.2

(If more than one "Yes"):

b. You have said (Read each category that was answered "Yes"). Which do you think is the most important?

1 = 12.3%
2 = 14.0
3 = 29.7
4 = 13.3
5 = 30.7

23. I'm going to read a list of items Chicago Public School principals currently have no control over. In your opinion, should principals have more control over the . . .

	Yes	No
a. hiring of teachers?	74.9%	25.1%
b. firing of teachers?	74.7	25.3
c. supervision of janitors and clerks in their buildings?	74.6	25.4
d. selection of subjects taught?	63.1	36.9
e. budget of their particular school? .	81.8	18.2
f. uses of the building outside normal school hours?	77.7	27.3

24. What do you think is the biggest problem facing the Chicago Public Schools?

15.7%	Not enough emphasis on discipline
11.6	Gangs in schools/gangs disrupting schools
10.7	Not enough money
7.5	Poor quality of teachers and other personnel
6.9	Poor quality of education/not teaching basic skills
6.9	Administration costly and inefficient/system is too large
6.1	Schools overcrowded/class size too large/not enough teachers
5.1	Teachers are apathetic or not dedicated or just interested in money
4.9	Mismanagement of available money/poor allocation of available money
3.7	Parent apathy concerning child's education/Lack of parental discipline
3.3	Drugs/alcohol in the schools
2.9	More money for teachers
2.1	Low school attendance (truancy)/High dropout rate
1.8	Bad race relations/segregated schools
1.4	Lack of communication between parents and teachers/other school personnel
1.3	Student apathy
0.8	Lack of innovative programs, e.g., computers/materials
0.8	Lack of communication between parent/teachers/students
0.7	Poor maintenance of school property
0.4	Busing kids out of the neighborhood
0.2	Crimes (not necessarily related to gangs)/violence
0.2	Don't think there is a problem
3.4	MISCELLANEOUS

Now, I would like to ask you a few questions about you and your household.

25. How many children living in your household are under the age of 18?

0 = 53.4%	4 = 4.2	None (Skip to Q.30) . . 0
1 = 17.0	5 = 1.1	_____children
2 = 15.8	6 = 0.4	
3 = 7.9	7 = 0.1	

26. (Are any of them/is she/he) currently attending school?

Yes	83.9%
No (Skip to Q.30)	16.1

27. (Are they/is she/he) in grades K-8 or 9-12? (Circle all that apply.)

K-8	81.8%
9-12	42.8

28. a. (Are any/is she/he) in . . .

	Yes	No
[1] Public school?	74.8%	25.2%
[2] Parochial or other private school	31.3	68.7

(Ask if any child is in public school, otherwise skip to Q.30.)

b. What is the name of the public school(s) your children attend?

_____

c. If you could afford it, would you put your child(ren) in a private school?

Yes	69.1%
No	30.9

d. Why?

45.0%	Better education/students get more attention
19.7	Extra help/attention/smaller class size
15.3	Better discipline in private schools
10.8	Better teachers and better teaching
9.2	MISCELLANEOUS

e. Why not?

55.5%	Satisfied with public school system
16.1	Child can learn at any school
5.8	Not way to spend money/waste of money
22.6	MISCELLANEOUS

29. In general, how well does/do the public school(s) your child(ren) attend keep you informed about . . .

	Very Well	Not Too Well	Not Well At All
a. your (child's/children's) educational program? Would you say	66.6%	22.3%	11.1%
b. your (child's/children's) educational progress?	68.1	24.3	7.6
c. how the local school works?	49.3	35.4	15.3
d. how the school system works?	40.0	38.0	22.0

30. Are you a registered voter?

Yes	93.1%
No	6.9

31. What is the highest grade or year in elementary school, high school, or college you have completed?

None	00
Elementary	01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08
High School	09 10 11 12
College	13 14 15 16
Some graduate school	17
Graduate or professional degree	18

32. In what year were you born? 19_____

33. Are you of Spanish or Hispanic origin or descent?

Yes	7.7%
No	92.3

34. What race do you consider yourself?

White	40.6%
Black	53.4
Asian	0.9
Other (Specify) _____	5.1

35. What are the names of the two streets that intersect at the corner nearest your house?

_____

36. What is your zip code? 606_____

37. In 1984, what was the approximate annual income from employment and from all other sources for all members of your household before taxes? Was it . . . (Repeat until "Yes".)

Less than $5,000?	Yes . .	20.7%
Less than $8,000?	Yes . .	7.6
Less than $10,000?	Yes . .	6.6
Less than $15,000?	Yes . .	11.5
Less than $20,000?	Yes . .	11.9
Less than $25,000?	Yes . .	10.2
Less than $40,000?	Yes . .	20.5
$40,000 or more	No . .	11.3

38. Circle sex of respondent.

Male	33.1%
Female	66.9

Thank you for your cooperation.